

# Domenico Losurdo

## The Germans: A *Sonderweg* of a cursed nation?

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He was a member of the Italian Communist Party until its dissolution. He has written on Kant and Hegel, the philosophers of modernity, and Nietzsche, the critic of modernity, as well as on Marx and Stalin. He criticized in particular the notion of totalitarianism, a Cold War concept which allowed Hitler and Stalin, against the evidence, to be seen as equivalent historical figures.

'The Germans: A *Sonderweg* of a cursed nation?' has only been published in German. The translation below is by Angela Stone for IFA.

### CHAPTER 2

#### THE INTERNATIONAL ORIGINS OF NAZISM

##### 1. The North American Model

At this point it is necessary to ask a question: is it possible to understand the emergence of Nazism while looking only at Germany? References from two very different authors will help us to tackle this problem. A particularly useful quote is the excellent motto from Tocqueville: 'whoever has seen and investigated France alone will never—or so I dare to claim—understand anything about the French Revolution'[1]. In turn, Lenin speaks of 'three sources' and of the 'three components of Marxism', that is to say, 'German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism'. With both authors there is a strong emphasis on international frameworks. Why should we act any differently in our own studies of the theories and practice of the National Socialist counter revolution, why restrict ourselves to the national dimension?

It is notable that the authors who contributed to the ideology supporting the Third Reich, and the Nazi leaders themselves, do not make reference to the rejected Hohenzollern when they present their racial and colonial programme. What then are the models for Nazi ideology? The white North Americans' urge to expand certainly exerted an irresistible fascination on the Nazi leaders. In 1919, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck celebrated 'Americanism' or '*Amerikanertum*' as being synonymous with 'colonisation' and 'pioneering'. He went on to say that it was a 'great' and 'new principle', that, when properly understood, would lead to taking sides with the 'emerging nations' and the 'emerging races'[2].

'Americanism', Leopold Ziegler later stressed—in an essay of the same name which offered an analysis of this phenomenon—did not only express the 'mentality of the colonised races' or exist as a synonym for 'colonisation'. Americanism, he argued,

also stands for colonisation on a large scale, in the 'large space' of a 'violent *Lebensraum*'. The history of the United States was 'the history of an unprecedented expansion, an extension, a rise', and it confirmed, in vivid terms, the 'inequality and the imbalance in value between the different races' and between different individuals of the same race.

In 1928, Hitler himself spoke of the value of '*Amerikanertum*'. He saw it as the expression of a 'young, racially selected people' (Zweites Buch [ZB], 125). Germany felt a strong affinity towards the USA: the conquest of the 'Far West' recalled the epic progress of the medieval German knight to the east. According to Hitler, one must follow in the traces of this knight in order to create an enclosed territorial empire in Central and Eastern Europe. In doing so, one should bear in mind the American model, whose 'unprecedented inner strength' was praised in *Mein Kampf* (MK, 153).

But how should the German conquerors behave towards the subjected people? The intention was certainly not to found a multi-ethnic state. There was also no point in implementing assimilation and 'Germanisation' of the Slavs as, according to Hitler, it must not be forgotten that 'Germanisation can take place on the ground but never in people'. To believe that 'a black or a Chinese person can become a German because he learns German and is prepared to speak the German language in the future, and to give his vote to a German political party' would be ridiculous. For Hitler, 'such a Germanisation is in reality an '*Entgermanisation*,' or a reversal of the Germanisation process. This signifies 'the beginning of a bastardisation' and therefore 'the extermination of German elements,' 'the annihilation of exactly those qualities that once enabled conquering people to rise victorious' (MK, 428). The Nazi leader made reference to the United States once again, saying that the United States strived to merge 'the racially equal' or racially related elements (the European and, in particular, the northern immigrants) into 'a new nation'. This excluded those 'foreign-blooded people who had developed a national feeling or racial instinct' (in particular the Blacks). Hitler commented that 'the American union feels itself to be a Nordic Germanic state and in no way an international mishmash of races' (ZB, 131).

The plan to implement a racial state was closely connected with the programme of colonial continental expansion that was happening on an international level. It was not only Soviet Russia that was emerging as the sworn enemy of the white race and culture in Europe. France, too, was on the hated list. The abolition of slavery in France came with the Jacobin revolution, as well as the picking of black people as troops to fight not only in the war but also in the occupation of the Rhineland. France also tolerated relationships between black soldiers and German women, which led to the pollution of Aryan blood. Furthermore, the French did not seem to have any internal racial consciousness as they made no attempt to keep the purity of the Aryan race and therefore tolerated the 'bastardisation', 'blackening' and 'general niggerization' (*Verniggerung*) of the nation. (MK, 730 and ZB, 152).

Once more, the North American republic was used as a positive model for Germany. After stressing that 'the fusion of a higher race with a lower' leads to disastrous consequences, Adolf Hitler went further in *Mein Kampf*:

'History furnishes us with innumerable instances that prove this law. It shows, with startling clarity, that whenever Aryans have mingled their blood with that of an inferior race the result has been the downfall of the people who were the standard-bearers of a higher culture. In North America, where the population is prevalently Teutonic, and where those elements intermingled with the inferior race only to a very small degree, we have a quality of mankind and a civilization which are different from those of Central and South America. In these latter countries the immigrants - who mainly belonged to the Latin races - mated with the aborigines, sometimes to a very large extent indeed. In this case we have a clear and decisive example of the effect produced by the mixture of races. But in North America the Teutonic element, which has kept its racial stock pure and did not mix it with any other racial stock, has come to dominate the American Continent and will remain master of it as long as that element does not fall a victim to the habit of adulterating its blood.' (MK, 223-4)[i].

On this point which is so crucial to the fate of culture, Germany was unfortunately left behind. Germany carelessly granted state citizenship without taking regard of the 'race' or the 'physical health' of the immigrants, when instead they should have followed the USA's example:

'At present there exists one State which manifests at least some modest attempts that show a better appreciation of how things ought to be done in this matter. It is not, however, in our model German Republic but in the U.S.A. that efforts are made to conform at least partly to the counsels of common sense. By refusing immigrants permission to enter if they are in a bad state of health, and by excluding certain races from the right to become naturalized as citizens, they have begun to introduce principles similar to those on which we wish to ground the People's State.' (MK, 340)

The United States anticipated the Nazis distinction between 'citizens' and 'foreigners', which was sanctioned in the Nuremberg laws of 1935. But even before the Nazis seized power, Hitler stressed that neither a 'negro', 'Jew, Pole, African, nor Asian' could be a German citizen (MK, 339).

Alfred Rosenberg expressed himself in similar terms. In 1937 he celebrated the exemplary model of the United States, this 'superb country of the future', who should be praised for formulating the successful 'new ideas of a racial state'. These ideas, 'with youthful might' were instrumental in leading to the expulsion and deportation of 'the niggers and the yellow races' (*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* [MZJ], 666 and 673). In Germany, those with Jewish backgrounds were made to play the role of the Afro-Americans. Rosenberg wrote that the '*Niggerfrage*', was at 'the pinnacle of consciousness in the USA'. If the absurd principle of racial equality for the Blacks had been abandoned in the US, he wrote, then why shouldn't the necessary consequences also be drawn for the Jews and yellow races' in Germany? (MZJ, 668)

In view of the failure of Wilhelm II's policy to found a colonial empire abroad, and of the isolation resulting from the sea blockade led by England straight after the outbreak of the First World War, Hitler sought to build a continental colonial empire in Eastern Europe. In the *Table Talks*, recorded while the army went deeper and deeper into the east, Hitler stressed his point of view: the war against the 'natives' of Eastern Europe was to be compared with the war against the Native Americans; in both cases the stronger race will be victorious[4].

In fact, the 'native' Eastern Europeans, who were decimated in order to allow the 'Germanisation' of conquered and

occupied areas were like the Native Americans in one respect; but in another way they were like the Afro-Americans who were used as slaves to work and serve the master race. Sexual relationships and marriages were forbidden between the two races; miscegenation was banned just as in America in the centuries of black slavery and the regime of white supremacy.

The special barbarity of the Third Reich lay in their attempt to take over and radicalise colonial and racist traditions (and apply them to Eastern Europe), at a time when these traditions had been brought into turmoil by the huge emancipation movement of the October Revolution in Kielwasser. Furthermore, this attempt to revive colonial traditions in their worst forms, much to the disadvantage of the old civilised people, was not implemented under 'peaceful' conditions as with the conquest of the Far West, but instead took place in the midst of a cruel and merciless World War. These factors all inevitably added to the sense of atrocity. This proves the importance of taking the concrete, national and international, historical context of the developments of colonialism and imperialism into account rather than blaming the supposedly evil nature of the Germans.

## 2. Under Man and *Untermensch*

Also on a categorial and linguistic level we can see the American model's clear influence on Nazi ideology. One only has to consider the word '*Untermensch*' to see this. The term *Untermensch* is associated with dehumanisation and violent holocaust in Nazi ideology. The term is central to the theory and practice of the Third Reich, but, in actuality, an investigation into the origins of this term reveals a surprising discovery: '*Untermensch*' is nothing other than a translation of the American term 'under man'.

Alfred Rosenberg identified this connection and pointed it out in 1930, expressing his surprise at the US-American author, Lothrop Stoddard. The latter is responsible for coining the term in question, which appears in the subtitle of his book, *The Revolt of Civilisation: The Menace of the Under Man*, published in New York in 1922 and then as a German translation three years later in Munich (*Die Drohung des Untermenschen*). In 1933 the top theoretician of the Nazi movement acknowledged this less significant ideologist, who through his study of the 'fundamentals' of 'race research' warned of the danger that lay in the customary contrast between the animal world and humanity. In fact the last term covers two very different realities: the 'Nordic person' and the 'under man', of which Stoddard was the first to speak [6].

The US-American author we are referring to here was by no means an isolated individual in his country. He was praised by two presidents of the United States (Warren Gamaliel Harding and Herbert Clark Hoover). The comment from Harding is especially noteworthy: he recommends that 'everyone should take the time to read Stoddard's *Clashing Tides of Colour*, and should note that the problem of race occurring in the USA is simply part of a wider racial conflict that is taking place all over the world'. One can now comprehend the extent of the sympathy and enthusiasm that the Nazis had for Stoddard. When Stoddard spent a few months in Germany, he met not only some of the greatest 'scientists' in the field of race, but also the grandees of the regime, including Heinrich Himmler, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Richard Walther Darré and even Hitler himself [7].

For Stoddard, the mortal combat against the 'under man' was part of a highly significant racial eugenics programme. It was important to cleanse 'the race of its worst impurities', and to have a policy of 'racial cleansing', of 'racial purification'.

It was necessary to systematically apply the discoveries of Francis Galton and to adopt 'the science of eugenics' or 'race betterment' [8].

Now we come to another significant word in Nazi ideology that is mostly translated as 'racial hygiene'. At this point it is worth taking a look at the history of this particular term, which takes us back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The term '*Rassenhygiene*' was used by Alfred Ploetz when he made reference to the studies of the 'famous genetics researcher, Francis Galton'. Reflecting on his impressions of the USA, Ploetz described it as a place where the new science had enjoyed great triumphs. He commented that the reason for these triumphs were that the 'Aryans' found themselves in a battle against 'Indians, negroes, and mixed races', and the 'forward-looking yankees' were concerned that the new immigrants would be able to win the upper hand over the long-settled whites thanks to their abundant fertility [9].

Some years later a book appeared in Munich which in its title praised the USA as the exemplary model for 'racial hygiene'. The author, Austro-Hungarian vice consul in Chicago, praised the United States for the 'sobriety' and 'pure practical sense' which they energetically applied to tackle the important problem of racial hygiene. The task in hand was the successful execution of racial hygiene through encouraging the 'reproduction of the most racially competent' and discouraging that of the 'inferior'. Furthermore, this included a comprehensive 'assessment of immigrants' whereby not only undesirable individuals, but also 'whole races' would be weeded out [10]. Racial hygiene was also practised on another level: there was 'the ban on intermarriage' and 'extramarital mixing of white and black races'; any violation of these laws was punishable with up to ten years in prison. Those who facilitated the 'crime' could be prosecuted as well as those directly involved. Quite apart from the legal rulings we should not forget the importance of actual practices and beliefs with such strong messages as that 'the purity of the race will be almost unconsciously striven for, and mixing with Negroes or with Asian blood will be considered as a crime and a disgrace' [11]. We have now come again to the core of Nazi ideology and Nazi language, with the investigation into the terminology '*Rassereinheit*' (racial purity) as against '*Rassenmischung*' (mixing of races) and '*Rassenschande*' (racial defilement) or '*Blutschande*' (defilement of the blood).

The linguistic influence of the American model also applies to other central themes in Nazi ideological discourse. It may suffice to say that even the term '*Endlösung*' (final solution) first made an appearance in books in the USA at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The reference was less explicit, perhaps, and was without Hitler's murderous implications, however it did suggest a 'final and complete solution' (in German: *endgültige und vollständige Lösung*) or the 'ultimate solution' (*die ultimative Lösung*) to the problem of the 'inferior people', in particular the Blacks [12].

It is also significant that the teachers of Nazism were not only Germans, as the theory of the German *Sonderweg* would have us believe. One cannot fully comprehend Nazism without recognising the prevalence of a world-wide desire to achieve the kind of terrorist white supremacist regime that had first been seen in the history of the United States. Those who focus their attention on Germany alone will never be in a position to fully explain the terrors of the Hitler regime.

When Hitler gave his speech in front of the Düsseldorf *Industrieclub* on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1932—a speech that finally won him the support of the representatives of industry for his rise to power—the Führer outlined the important choice that faced Germany and the whole world, a choice between 'the future or the downfall of the white race'. For his part, Hitler had fought

to his utmost to defend 'the absolute innate feeling of mastery by the white race' (Reden und Proklamationen [RP], 75 and 78). When reading this it is hard not to think of the pioneers of white supremacy in the southern states of the US. By the same token, when reading about the 'racist belief systems' that were expressed in the southern states by armed and uniformed people during the 'jubilee of the white supremacy' at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we are led back to Nazism:

'1. "Blood will tell." 2. The white race must dominate. 3. The Teutonic peoples stand for race purity. 4. The Negro is inferior and will remain so. 5. "This is a white man's country." 6. No social equality. 7. No political equality [...] 10. Let there be such industrial education of the Negro as will best fit him to serve the white man [...] 14. Let the lowest white man count for more than the highest Negro. 15. The above statements express the will of Providence.' [13]

Thus we are led back to Nazism, all the more because this catechism was advocated by people who dedicated themselves in theory and practice to the task of absolute 'superiority of the Aryans' and were even prepared to fight the constitution 'to the devil' in order to confront the 'terrible unholy national threat' of the Blacks. Despite a few individual critical voices who thought that, terrorised as they are, 'negroes do no one any harm', racist groups were still prepared 'to kill them and remove them from the surface of the earth' and are determined to install 'an absolute racial autocracy' with the 'full identification of the strongest race with the requirements of the state' [14].

That is not to say, however, that Nazism's regard for North America was without criticism; there were of course subjects about which they did not agree. For example, Hitler and Rosenberg both expressed negative opinions on the role that was ascribed to Jews there. Furthermore, it is important to note that the influence discussed here was by no means a one way street. Stoddard studied in Germany and was deeply influenced by Nietzsche. He coined the term 'Under Man' as a counterpart to the German philosopher's term, '*Übermenschen*' ('above men'), and when he announced his total disgust for the 'Under Man' (who was consumed by envy of superior characters) he was probably influenced by the figures of the '*Schlechtweggekommenen*' ('vile and worthless individuals') or the '*Missratenen*' ('failures'), which Nietzsche frequently referred to.

The connection that has been made in this essay between Nazism and colonial tradition, particularly in the continent's methods of colonial expansion, was obvious to the great theoreticians of the anti-colonial liberation movement. When Franz Fanon called attention to the crimes, the 'deportations', 'massacres', 'forced labour', and 'enslavement' of that time—which colonialism had committed 'for centuries'—he also added that 'Nazism transformed the whole of Europe into a genuine colony' [16]. Today, unfortunately, the left are not in a position to effectively confront the dominant ideology which has every interest in acquitting the system of capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. Instead, the left sees only one holocaust and restricts itself to accusing one country and one single, cursed people.

### 3. Anti-Semitism in the USA and in Germany

After the 'Germanisation of the land' and thus, the decimation of the 'natives' of Eastern Europe, those left over had to work as slaves or partial slaves at the service of the master race. Jewish Bolsheviks, on the other hand, were to be completely exterminated. They were the '*Untermenschen*' who disturbed the natural racial hierarchy, encouraged and led the revolts of



the inferior races and even wanted to achieve 'the extermination of the European races', those 'Aryan' and 'European-Aryan nations'.

It should be made clear that developments in anti-Semitism were not exclusive to Germany. Hatred of the Jews was virulent on both banks of the Rhine at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a point for which the success of authors like Edouard Drumont and the case of Alfred Dreyfus provide proof. These are the decades in which Germany seemed to be the centre of Judaism. In 1848, Engels wrote, 'German is known as the Jewish universal language', that is 'in New York as it is in Constantinople, in Petersburg as in Paris' (Marx Engels Werke, 5, 323). Even at the beginning of the First World War, Hermann Cohen, an important German philosopher of Jewish background, published a short book which discussed as its main theme, the concept that 'Germanity and Judaism are intimately connected'.

The defeat and the treaty of Versailles did not at once lead to a radical change. The report by Leo Löwenthal concerning Germany in the twenties can be of interest here:

'We used to laugh about the fact that there was a tiny hotel in Frankfurt [...] that had a sign saying 'Jews not welcome' or 'Jews not wanted'. Then there was a small bathing place, Borkum near Norderney, that was 'reserved' for anti-Semites. But we didn't take any of it seriously... I didn't truly experience the kind of anti-Semitism that made it impossible to go to certain restaurants, hotels or clubs until I came to America.' [18]

Furthermore, Oswald Spengler felt the need to express his attitude towards the Jews in 1933, saying, 'When we speak about race it is not meant in the way that is now fashionable with anti-Semites in Europe and America, namely, Darwinian and materialistic.' This shows that the level of anti-Semitism in the United States seemed exaggerated and vulgar not only to an author of Jewish background whose beliefs were of the Frankfurt School, but also to a reactionary anti-Semite.

The North American republic is the primary country to have contributed the biggest part to the spreading of a motive that would later play a fatal role in the ideological spreading of the 'final solution'. The theory of a Jewish influence that steered the revolutionary movement which shook the West was already common in the US ideology of the white supremacy—even before Nazi ideologists and agitators. Madison Grant stressed the 'Semitic leadership' of 'Bolshevism' and Lothrop Stoddard stigmatized the 'Bolshevik regime of Soviet Russia' as being 'Jewish to a great extent'.

Here it is important to pay particular attention to the role of Henry Ford. Soon after October 1917, the car industry magnate tried to denounce the Bolshevik revolution as the result of a Jewish plot. For this purpose he founded a journal in 1919, the *Dearborn Independent* which enjoyed a large circulation. Articles from the journal were then published in book format in November 1920, with the title, '*The International Jew*'. This quickly became the first port of call for international anti-Semitism. Theories that played a central role in Nazi ideology can be found here, for example that 'the Russian revolution has racist [Jewish], not political, origins'. The Jews seem to draw on humanitarian and social notions but, according to the book, in fact express a 'racist desire for world domination'. Ford's book also strongly contributed to creating credibility for and promoting the distribution of '*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*'—a forgery created in the circle of the czarist secret police and published in Russian in 1903 in St Petersburg.

Later, Nazi bigwigs, like Baldur von Schirach and even Heinrich Himmler, went on to explain that they were inspired by Ford and that their work sprang from his ideology. Himmler in particular claimed that 'the whole danger of Judaism' was not realised fully until Henry Ford's book, calling it 'a revelation for us National Socialists.' Next was the literature of the Protocols.

'Both of these books showed us the path that we had to follow in order to free the afflicted people from the greatest enemy of all, the international Jew', Himmler claimed. According to Himmler, Ford's book together with the *Protocols* played a 'crucial' role for the formation of his ideas as well as Hitler's. What is certain is that the '*International Jew*' was published with great pride in the Third Reich, with forewords praising the American author and industrialist on his clarification of the 'Jewish question' (*Judenfrage*) and also stressing the connection between Henry Ford and Adolf Hitler. [22]

Regarding the virulence of anti-Semitism in France towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a leading Israeli researcher, Zeev Sternhell, spoke of the 'French origins of fascism' [23]. But this point of view is one-sided, even if it does have the merit of questioning the myth of a Germany who persistently represents the worst of the reactionary. It would be more accurate to talk of fascism and Nazism as having international origins. In the elaboration of the motives of the Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy, motives which allegedly threatened the whole world after first swallowing up their own country, the representatives of the White Russian counterrevolution, who emigrated from the Soviet Union to Germany, played a central role. But bigger still is the role that the North American model played in providing a blueprint for Hitler's colonial and racial programme, particularly in the white supremacist southern states. With regards to the ideological preparation of the 'final solution', we must, of course, keep Germany in mind at all times, but it is essential that we do not lose sight of the international context.

#### 4. The racist counterrevolution from the USA to Germany

This is not a question of indulging in a banal 'anti-Americanism' as those who fail to submit to the holy image of the United States as the temple of freedom are often accused of doing. Quite the contrary, highlighting the influence that the American reactionary movement had on the German and European reactionaries is also to stress the value of this mostly forgotten great revolution that took place in the USA. The end of the American Civil War signified not only the abolition of slavery but also the emergence of a multi-ethnic democracy—even if under the difficult conditions of a long lasting state of emergency. In the southern states the former slave owners had turned into unruly rebels and the Union and their troops required the cooperation of the Blacks to gain control. Black people now had political rights and civil rights and therefore played an important role in voting and gaining access to representative bodies and, occasionally, leadership roles.

This period of reconstruction may have been the happiest period in the history of Afro-Americans but it was only liberating for a short space of time, until 1877. In exchange for their agreement to the unassailable national unity and protection of the industry that was benefitting the North, the former slave owners, who up until now had been kept under control by the government, shook off military and political control and won back their self-government. As a result, black people lost their political, and to a great extent also civil, rights through the passing of legislation: there was to be a racial state that implemented the strictest racial segregation, brutal oppression and degradation against those who were suspected of having even just one drop of non-white blood (one drop rule). This state exercised a gruesome terror regime against any black person who dared to question the regime of white supremacy, even if only in their sexual behaviour. The second American revolution that took place between the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era suffered such a disastrous defeat that it manifested on an ideological level as well: the idea of racial

equality was ridiculed and the dehumanisation of Blacks, who were represented as irredeemable savages or just plain animals, increased.

As György Lukács asserted, whilst the defeat of the Peasants' War in Germany and the 1848 revolution in Germany and Europe may well have influenced the international reaction which resulted in fascism and Nazism, what was much more influential was the failure of the Abolitionist Movement in America. The change that took place because of this had already been recognised by the most clear-sighted witnesses of that time. Friedrich Ratzel, one of the great theoreticians of geopolitics, painted a very distinct picture on his visit to the USA at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: the idea of loyalty to the principle of 'equality' had vanished, to be replaced by the reality of 'racial aristocracy'. This was not just a question of Blacks being robbed of their political rights. Although some may try to ignore it, according to Ratzel, the 'color line' was ripping American society apart so strongly that 'it even affect[ed] the Institute for the Blind'. Absolute segregation was enshrined in the law in the United States, as it was in society in general. 'Intermarriage' between the races was not only frequently forbidden by law but, in addition to this, couples of different races were often discouraged from marrying because their offspring were counted as Blacks and therefore subject to the same harsh discrimination. Afro-Americans were isolated as though by a cordon and shut out from the 'major national associations' (including the trade unions). The 'idealists' or the 'education fanatics' hoped for the welfare consequences of education and upbringing. In reality, however, the 'educated Negro families' were subjected to an even harsher discrimination, and were suspected of being the most dangerous members of the inferior race. Were there benefits to abolitionism? The 'social intercourse' between whites and blacks '[was] more restricted than at the time of slavery'. Moreover on a legal level the different pieces of legislation were undermined by the fact that legislation was interpreted completely differently according to race—as shown by the Lynch Law against the Blacks and the 'suppression and extermination of the Native Americans'. The immigrants from the east too, the last of the 'three groups of the "coloured"', were affected by the severity of the white supremacy regime.

It must be noted that after the Abolition Movement, the project of a society based on the principle of racial equality failed utterly. In the USA, there existed a society which 'avoid[ed] slavery but [kept] the type of subordination according to race amongst the social stratification', which adhered to the principle of 'racial aristocracy'. Ratzel came to the following conclusion: 'experience has shown that it is necessary to recognise race differences'; they prove to be much more enduring 'than the abolition of slavery which turned out to be a mere episode or experiment. A 'reversal' concerning the abolitionists and the supporters of the principle of equality took place. Ratzel claimed that these elements would have consequences reaching further than just inside the USA, insisting, 'we are standing on the brink of repercussions the effects of which will touch Europe more than Asia.' [25]

Ratzel was not alone in his prediction that ultimately the theories and practices of the white supremacy would exert influence beyond US borders. In 1926, Ziegler stressed that 'the fanfare of an America socially revolutionised from the top downwards' plays irresistible music that will fall on attentive and sympathetic ears across the Atlantic. This comes as a result of the theoretical recognition and practical application of the 'iron law of inequality', not only of individuals but also increasingly of races. [26]

In particular, it is Hoffmann, the aforementioned vice consul of Austria-Hungary, who recognised the expansive potential of

the racist counterrevolution which ensued in the failure of the Reconstruction. He commented that despite the 'Abolitionist Civil War' in the USA, there is still a 'ban on racial mixing' and a legitimisation for this was confirmed by the highest court. Also, in addition to this was the exclusion of Blacks from the right to vote as well as their segregation in churches, schools, public transport etc. 'The teaching of natural rights' was forgotten too, in this "free" country that is so often used as the symbol for freedom. Europe needed urgently to catch up on things here; in Europe the Blacks from colonies were treated as 'interesting and exotic' by society. What a difference between the behaviour of the Americans, 'so proud of the purity of their race', who avoid contact with non-whites, even those who only have 'a drop of negro blood' flowing through their veins! 'Never was there so much written or spoken about race and racial dominance as in America'. Indeed, 'Galton's dream, racial hygiene becoming the religion of the future, approached realization in America. In a course of victory without compare, his dream conquered the New World.' The spread of racial hygiene, which took the USA by storm, did not stop at its borders. To conclude, it was the "homo europaeus", the Germanic or Nordic type, who [found] in America its most numerous admirers.' [27] 'If America can in any way be Europe's teacher, then it [was] in the *Neger- [und Rassen]frage* (the issue of Negroes and race).' [28]

It is all the more necessary to note the example given by North America because the racial state had more than just one internal political meaning. We are dealing with a movement that aimed to 'cultivate a new, ideal, world dominating race'. This was an ideology that did not permit Europe to hang back, as 'the ennobling racial attempts of America were exemplary' and called on Europe to follow suit. [29]

The concern about lagging behind the USA in the practical application of a doctrine that would decide the fate of the world spread in Europe. In 1923, a German doctor, Fritz Lenz, complained that Germany was far behind the USA on developments in 'racial hygiene'. [30] After the devolution of power to the Nazis, the racial ideologists and 'scientists' stressed that 'there [was] a lot for Germany to learn from the systematic North Americans' example', according to Hans F. Günther in 1934. Günther went on to comment that luckily the Germans were not too far behind and they had started to catch up, recognising the importance of the 'iron law of inequality' for races and individuals, a principle handed over by the North American author Stoddard. [31]

Finally, Hitler himself referred indirectly to the ideology of white supremacy. In 1928 he sang the praises of the 'American union', who had 'put together special measures for immigration, inspired by the teachings of its own race researchers'. America's example, Hitler noted, showed that 'the National Socialist movement has the task of applying existing or emerging discoveries of race science to practical politics.' Furthermore, the teachings from beyond the Atlantic are also valuable to the National Socialists in a theoretical sense, Hitler commented, since we are concerned with scientific insights that illuminate world history (ZB, 125 u. 127).

Therefore, this is a useful key to have at our disposal, helping us to reach—beyond superficial appearances—an understanding of political and social conflicts, not only of the present, but also of the past.

## 5. Gobineau and the 'Anglo-Americans' as 'representatives' of the 'culture' of genocide

Above all, it is important to recognise one thing: if the tendency to frame the whole of Germany's history as some sort of build up to the 'final solution' is truly prevalent today, then it should

suffice to go back some decades before the Third Reich in order to contemplate the extent and full horror of genocide, as seen in the suffering of the Native Americans, and as seen quite plainly in the nation of annihilators, the Anglo-Americans. Let us read Arthur de Gobineau, who wrote that, contrary to the Germanic people who were prepared to 'share the country with the former occupiers', the Anglo-Saxon stock established in America, was characterised by their pitiless inflexibility towards the natives. It was 'not only their ways' that they 'could no longer tolerate' but also, their 'life' itself that they could no longer allow. The Germanic people, according to the French author, 'were too vigorous by nature to comprehend imposing the use of strong liquor or poisons on their subjects or foreign nations. That is an invention of modern times. Neither the Vandals, Goths, Franks nor the first Saxons would have considered it and even the civilisation of the ancient world, however refined and decadent, never had such an idea. Neither the Brahmins nor the Magi found the need to comprehensively wipe out anything that did not follow their way of thinking. Our civilisation is the only one which possesses this instinct for violence and murder, it is the only one to act—without anger, without agitation, but instead with exceedingly delusional mildness and sympathy, an expression of the most unbounded gentleness—to incessantly surround themselves with a horizon of tombs.'

Gobineau certainly considered moral blame in this case to be excessive and inappropriate, writing that 'the Anglo-Americans, as convinced and true representatives of this type of culture, fashioned their laws accordingly. One cannot blame them.' However, this judgment would not be accepted today if one try to apply it to Auschwitz and the administrative genocide. The Anglo-Americans were, in a certain sense, responsible for a one-off Holocaust: the radical way in which the Native Americans were eradicated 'was completely novel on earth'. [32]

Regarding the North American settlers, Theodor Waitz, a German race theoretician (a further irony of the story), pointed out the most complete example of the genocide of this time: 'According to the teaching of the American school [...] the higher races are determined to repress the lower races, as it has always happened on earth when there is a higher entity and a lower one. The perishing of the lower races corresponds to divine purpose and shows not only our recognition of the right of the white Americans to exterminate the Red Indians, but also identifies piety in praising the way they have always devoted themselves as enlightened and insightful tools in bringing about the realisation of extermination. The pious apostle of murder may feel sadness about the unfortunate fate of the Red Indian race, but he finds solace in the fact that the natural laws are being followed, laws which dominate the rise and fall of peoples, according to the natural drives and instincts which were planted in the individual races by the creator Himself.' [33]

Let us turn to F. D. Roosevelt, who was appalled by the terrible crimes of the Third Reich during the Second World War and was fascinated momentarily by the peculiar idea of the 'castration' of the Germans. Perhaps if the US-American statesman had been able to read Gobineau and Waitz and their tips on the extermination-racism of "the American school" then he might have had more doubts. Then F. D. Roosevelt would have understood that the idea of avoiding the repetition of such practices through the 'castration' of the people in power could have also affected the people to whom he himself belonged. There is one fundamental truth not to be forgotten: far from being the repetition of identical versions, history is remarkable for constant alterations and radical changes. It is time to end the myth of an identity which remains unchanged through time.

At this point we can add a consideration of a political character. For better or worse, however incompletely and insufficiently, Germany has attempted to come to terms with

the past and with the horror of the Third Reich. On the other side of the Atlantic, by contrast, the US-American leaders and ideologues celebrate their country as 'the oldest democracy in the world'. Such a historical presentation makes the fate of the Native Americans and the Blacks seem completely unimportant. There has not been even a vague attempt to process the past. And it is exactly this clear conscience that gives Washington the impetus to export 'democracy' by force of arms. Under these conditions, it is pure madness to strengthen the clean consciences of today's extremely dangerous imperialists with continued talk of an eternally reactionary Germany.

## Notes

1. L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution, Chapters 1 and 4
2. Moeller van den Bruck 1919, p 39sq., 84, 102,
3. Ziegler 1926 p.69-71, 73,77
4. Losurdo 2007, ch. 5 p 6
5. Stoddard 1984 and Stoddard 1925. Also see Losurdo 2009, ch 27 p7
6. According to Hermann Grauch in Poliakov, Wulf 1978, p 409
7. Kühl 1994, p 61; the judgement of Harding is quoted at the beginning of Stoddard 1925
8. Stoddard 1984, p.42
9. Ploetz 1895, p77sq
10. Hoffmann 1913 pp. ix, 17, 111, 114
11. Hoffmann 1913, p.67sq, 17
12. See Losurdo 2010, ch. 10 p4
13. Woodward 1963, pp. 335-6 (English translation)
14. Woodward 1963, p332
15. See Losurdo 2009 ch.27, p 7
16. Fanon 1961, p57
17. Cohen 1915, p48
18. Quoted in Scheible 2003, p13
19. Spengler 1933, p 157
20. Grant 1971 p xxxxi; Stoddard 1984 p 152
21. Ford 1933 p 128 sq. 145
22. See Losurdo 2007 ch. 5 p4
23. Sternhell 1978
24. Ratzel 1893 p 282sq,180sq
25. Ratzel 1893 p 179-182 and 283
26. Ziegler 1926 p 69-89
27. Hoffmann 1913 p. 114, 14
28. Id. Pp46 and 67sq
29. Id. Pp114, 14 and 125
30. In Lifton 1988, p. 29
31. Günther 1934 p 465
32. Gobineau 1904, Vol.4 pp278-81 (Bookvi, ch. Viii)
33. Waitz 1859 p. 430

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## Submission by *Jews for Justice for Palestinians* to the Chakrabarti Inquiry into anti-Semitism and other forms of racism within the Labour Party. June 2016

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Extracts.

### 3. Allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party

3.1 While JfJfP cannot comment on the details of individual cases, we do have some general observations.

3.2 As other commentators have noted, the scale and tone of media commentary has seemed disproportionate. A useful **collation of cases** up to 27th April by Jamie Stern-Weiner identifies allegations about ten individuals; and there were additional suspensions in May, though the number is unclear. Together, these instances do not substantiate the claim of a wave or trend of antisemitism in the Labour Party.

3.3 These early cases (eleven including Ken Livingstone's) were the ones that grabbed the media's attention and were used to support the assertion that "the Labour party has a problem with antisemitism" (or, as the *Daily Telegraph* headed a report on 4th May "Chief Rabbi: Labour has a 'severe' problem with antisemitism"). It is worth looking at them in more detail:

- Three involve allegations of language which resemble classic antisemitic stereotypes: "Jewish-Zionist bourgeoisie", "of Jewish blood" [of Tesco], "[the] Jews are so powerful in the US it's disgusting". They do not refer to Israel/Palestine and are easy to deal with and assess in the light of traditional understandings of antisemitism.

- By contrast, Israel/Palestine is the focus, to a greater or lesser extent, of the other eight cases. These are, therefore, more problematic. While we acknowledge that discourse on Israel/Palestine can involve antisemitism, this should not be assumed. It is anything but the norm. Our experience tells us that, with debate about Israel/Palestine, we are more likely to be in the realm of contested political analysis, where allegations or accusations of antisemitism are themselves part of the political argument, indeed, have often become a proxy for the Israel/Palestine debate itself. Such allegations demand, therefore, the most careful and dispassionate evaluation.

3.4 First it must be acknowledged that people who strongly sympathise with the Palestinians may express themselves (knowingly or not) in terms which resemble or include antisemitic stereotypes. Also, people with antisemitic beliefs may find in the Israel/Palestine controversy a convenient opportunity to express them. In our experience such cases are rare. But equally, passionate supporters of Israel may perceive antisemitic motivations in their opponents without tangible evidence to support such perceptions, or with 'evidence' that is itself shaped by political judgment. And Israel's supporters may seek political advantage by deliberately deploying claims of antisemitism whenever Israel is subject to criticism. In JfJfP, many such cases have come to our attention.

3.5 Indeed, as long-time campaigners in this contentious field, we have experience of an almost visceral tendency among some pro-Israel advocates to cry antisemitism at those who criticise Israel or speak out in support of Palestinians. It is now far too routinely claimed that antisemitism is either intrinsic to criticism of Israel, or is behind or underlies it. Many of us have experienced such 'kneejerk' accusations of antisemitism from